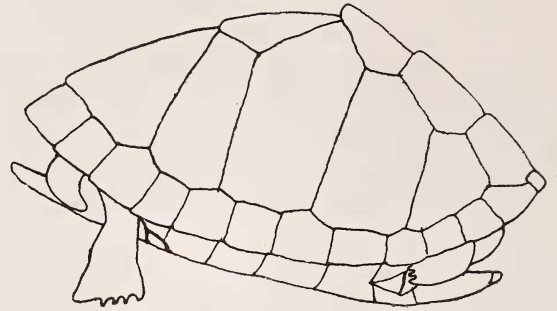


limbs makes the hindlimbs fully extended and planted vertically or obliquely to the substrate, while the head, tail and forelimbs are retained within the shell, thereby raising the posterior part of the shell considerably. In an 8.2 cm. (carapace length) specimen, the plastron was raised by 2 cm. Following adoption of the posture, the turtle may attempt to move forward, using its hind limbs, maintaining this unusual posture till suitable shelter is reached.

Evidently, the species assumes this defensive posture, as the head and forelimbs are given additional protection, being lowered close to the ground. Possibly turtles encountered by predators while wandering on land assume the posture, which gives some measure of protection to the exposed parts on the anterior opening of the shell, and may additionally con-



2 cm.

Fig. 1. Response of the Indian roofed turtle *Kachuga tecta* when physical contact is made to the retracted head and forelimbs.

found some of the land-dwelling predators, thereby giving them several moments to proceed towards the relative safety of water.

18/20, BALLYGUNGE PLACE (EAST),  
CALCUTTA - 700 019,  
April 23, 1986.

INDRANEIL DAS

#### 19. AN INCIDENCE OF A GECKO (*HEMIDACTYLUS* SP.) FEEDING ON A SKINK

One evening in the last week of March, 1987, we were taking a stroll about a litter strewn portion of our garden in the midst of Madras city, when we heard some strange rustling noises from beneath a Laurel tree. On investigation, we witnessed a short struggle between a gecko and a skink. The gecko had grabbed the skink by the base of the tail, and for a few seconds, we saw the skink thrashing about frantically. The victim then shed its tail and made good its escape, leaving the tail-piece wriggling in the captor's jaws. The gecko quickly gobbled up the offered morsel of the tail-end and disappeared into the litter.

The gecko was in all probability the tree gecko, *Hemidactylus leschenaulti*, which is a common dweller in the city gardens (Shekar Dattatri, pers. comm.). The skink appeared uniform dark brown all over with no stripes or markings, and was probably a sub-adult *Mabuya carinata*. Both predator and prey were about 5 inches in length.

There are two records of *H. leschenaulti* feeding on vertebrate prey. Sumithran (1982) observed the reptile feeding on a mouse, and later on, Dattatri (1984) reported a case of a *leschenaulti* predating on the sympatric

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

*H. frenatus* in a room in Madras City. But this could probably be the first reported case of a gecko feeding on a skink.

33 SARAVANA STREET,  
MADRAS 600 017,  
August 4, 1987.

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20. A NOTE ON THE FOOD HABIT OF THE GARDEN LIZARD,  
*CALOTES VERSICOLOR*

The garden lizard or blood sucker is mainly insectivorous in food habit and feeds on ants and insects which form a large proportion of the food. Other than insects, they occasionally feed on small birds, frogs and other small animals (Daniel 1983). There is one report by Daniel and Shull (1963) of *Calotes versicolor* eating unripe pods with soft seeds of the *Lima* bean.

On 18th October, 1986 at about 9 O'clock

in the morning, during a visit to Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Bombay, I happened to observe a garden lizard feeding on the buds of *Tabernaemontana montana*, which is cultivated at the entrance of the park. Interestingly, after eating the buds the lizard tasted the petals of the flower partially. This observation lends support to the fact that vegetable matter also are occasional food items of the garden lizard.

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